

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of Research

In every story of literary work, there must be a lesson that can be taken. A lesson that also known as moral value. Moral comes from the Latin word *mores*, meaning manners, custom and folkways and it is related to behavior that humans own (Hornby, 2013: 68). While values are ideals that guide or qualify your personal conduct and interaction with others (Juhaya in Rohyani, 2012). In accordance, it can be said that moral values can be defined as things to be right or wrong or desirable or undesirable (Muslich, 2006: 55).

Further, Wibawa (2013) stated that moral values can be used as a reference norm for a person or a group of people to determine whether the attitudes and action are good or not. Hence, it can be said that moral value is something that associated with attitudes and action whether they are good or bad. The education of moral values is very important and influential in human life. Moral values are considered very important because one of the sources of human happiness is having good morality. Besides, "moral education can be learn through other media such as books (novels or comics), newspapers, magazines, radio, television, drama, movies and so on, that can be used to educate the public morals" (Yusuf in Priyatna, 2015).

However in this research, the writer is interested in discussing a moral value in a novel. Novel as a genre of fiction can be defined as an "invented prose narrative of considerable length and a certain complexity that deals imaginatively with

human experience, usually through a connected sequence of events involving a group of persons in a specific setting" (Eagleton, 2005). A novel can be analyzed in several points of view. It can be analyzed from the moral, social and religious point of view. Further, the novel that is going to be analyzed by the writer is entitled *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett (2009).

The novel tells about African Americans (maids) working in American households where the setting of place is in Jackson, Mississippi during early 1960s. Unfortunately, the African American people were treated differently just because of their skin color. The white people treat them as if they are slaves rather than maids. The salary that is obtained by the 'black' people are pretty much lower than the 'white' one and the situation is getting worse when black people do not acquire any kind of insurance and get better job as like the white do. Yet, among all those white people, there is a person named Eugenia Skeeter Phelan (the major protagonist character) who feels that she must tell all people in town about what those African American people feel when they are working with white. She does that because she even has been raised by African American maid named Constantine and she just finds out that almost all of white people do not treat their maids just like she did. However, her acts in exposing the feeling of Africans' feeling is quite dangerous proposition, not only for herself, but also for all of maids that help her in giving the information. Then, at the end of the story, the book project that is made by Skeeter is successfully published and scattered in the whole town of Jackson, Mississippi. Although that book cannot help those maids pretty much in gaining the equality of rights, but at least the main character did make a change of white people's perspective about black people.

This novel becomes *The New York Times* bestseller fiction in 2009 and become the *Amazon's* best book of the year in the exact year. Moreover, this novel also wins over than 4 awards such as Indies Choice Book Award in 2010, International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award Longlist in 2011 and many more. In addition, this novel is telling the readers about racial issue and it is quite interesting to be discussed remembering that the problem of racism is still happen in America. Accordingly, the writer chooses this novel as the object of analysis.

Furthermore, the writer is interested in analyzing moral values since by explaining the moral values in literary works, it can tell the readers about lessons that can be taken from the story. A lesson that what people must do and do not or a lesson that is related to moral and education. Also, by analyzing the moral values, the readers also able to know what is right and wrong in order to shapes the character in an individual.

## **1.2 Research Question**

Based on the background of study, the writer formulates the research problem into:

What are moral values that can be taken as described in *The Help* novel by Kathryn Stockett?

## **1.3 Research Objective**

Regarding the research question, the objective of this study is to describe moral values found in *The Help* novel by Kathryn Stockett.

## **1.4 Uses of Research**

This research covers two uses of the study which are theoretical use and practical use.

### **1.4.1 Theoretical Use**

The writer hopes that this research can be used as one of the references for other researchers in analyzing the similar topic, that is moral value in literary works by using the sociological approach.

### **1.4.2 Practical Use**

Practically, the writer intends to make this analysis can be useful for the readers so that they can understand about moral values in literary works. Since there are some benefits that can be acquired by the readers if they understand the moral values, one of them is to earn a good lesson that can be taken from a story.

## **1.5 Research Scope**

There are so many things that can be discussed in the novel, however, the writer limits this research by only focusing to describes the moral values that can be found in *The Help* novel by Kathryn Stockett.